

U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 09/912,503
Amendment dated August 19, 2003
Reply to Office Action of April 23, 2003

REMARKS

Claims 1 to 5 are in the application wherein claims 1 and 3 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Suzuki, et al. in view of Sasaki, et al. The Examiner's recognition of the existence of allowable subject matter in claims 2, 4 and 5 is acknowledged and claim 2, from which claim 4 depends, and claim 5 are hereby amended in accordance with the Examiner's suggestion to make these claims allowable.

Also, claim 1 is amended in order to more clearly distinguish the claim from the combination of references cited in the rejection of claims 1 and 3. Specifically, it is respectfully submitted that the Examiner's position that the feed rollers 2, 3 in Suzuki, et al. are disposed "downstream" of the thermal head 17 in the feeding direction of the sheet is incorrect thereby rendering the rejection improper on the grounds indicated in the Office Action. That the Examiner's interpretation of the disclosure of the Suzuki, et al. reference is incorrect is clearly shown by the arrow 1 in Figure 1 which indicates the feeding direction of the printing medium (see column 1, lines 63 to 65 of the patent) and that shows the feed rollers 2, 3 and being upstream of the platen 20 and thermal head 17 contrary to the claimed invention.

(If, contrary to what is stated in the Office Action, the Examiner considers the "capstan rollers" 15 to be feed rollers disposed downstream of the thermal head 17, the reference is still not readable on the claimed structure because the reference device requires that both of the pair of rollers at 15 in Figure 2 of the drawing be "capstan rollers" (i.e., driving rollers) (see column 3, line 55) as contrasted with the feed rollers of claim 1 wherein only "one roller of the paired feed rollers located

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on said thermal head side with respect to said printed sheet is a driving roller".)

Further, the Examiner's suggestions to combine the teaching of Sasaki, et al. with the disclosure of the Suzuki, et al. reference does not show the claimed invention because in Sasaki, et al. the feed rollers (i.e., capstan roller 232a and punch roller 232b) operate to move the sheet 219b alternatively back and forth in the illustrated A and B directions of Figure 3, as contrasted with the feed sheet being moved continuously in a single direction in the present invention. Clearly, it is only when moving the sheet in the B direction that feed rollers of Sasaki, et al. can be considered to be downstream of the thermal head and this occurs only at alternate intervals. When the sheet of Sasaki, et al. is moved in the A direction, the rollers, contrary to the claimed rollers, are upstream of the thermal head.

Consequently, it is submitted that there is nothing contained in either of the Suzuki, et al. and Sasaki, et al. references that would suggest making the change which the Examiner holds would make Applicants' invention obvious. Moreover, in order to further distinguish the claimed invention over the cited references, claim 1, from which claim 3 depends, is amended herein to the extent of indicating that the feed of the printed sheet in the claimed device is unidirectional thereby clearly avoiding the back-and-forth movement of Sasaki, et al..

For the foregoing reasons it is submitted that all of the claims now in the application clearly distinguish over the references so that the claims are thereby patentable and the application is in condition for allowance. The Examiner is accordingly requested to favorably consider this Amendment and to allow the application.

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If, for any reason, it is believed that this application is not now in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to contact Applicants' undersigned attorney at the telephone number indicated below to arrange for an interview to expedite the disposition of this case.

In the event that this paper is not timely filed, Applicants respectfully petition for an appropriate extension of time. Please charge any fees for such an extension of time and any other fees which may be due with respect to this paper, to Deposit Account No. 01-2340.

Respectfully submitted,

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